



NASHVILLE AREA

Metropolitan Planning Organization

MEDIA RELEASE

Nashville Area MPO Solicits Active Transportation Project Proposals

Diversified Investment Strategy Targets Projects Encouraging Trip Choices that Promote Use of Active Modes

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NASHVILLE, Tenn.— In response to increasing support for healthy, clean, and livable communities, the Nashville Area MPO has announced the second iteration of a competitive “Call for Projects” under its Active Transportation Program. The program is sanctioned by a major policy provision of the MPO’s *2035 Regional Transportation*, allocating some additional funding toward active transportation¹ infrastructure and education throughout Middle Tennessee.

Shaped by extensive public and stakeholder input, in 2010 the MPO established a new direction for investments made with MPO-managed grant funds received through the Federal Highway Administration’s Urban Surface Transportation Program (USTP). The reformed strategy, under which this call-for-projects is issued, aligns transportation investments with Middle Tennessee’s stated goals for diversifying mobility options available to those living, working, and doing business in the Nashville area. “It essentially imbeds a Complete Streets approach, or consideration of all potential users of a roadway regardless of their age or ability—with some funding to back it up—into the decision-making process for the largest source of federal funding that we administer,” said Leslie Meehan, the MPO’s Director of Healthy Communities.

At least 15 percent of the MPO’s USTP resources have been made available for walking, bicycling, or transit-supportive projects that may not otherwise receive funding through more traditional revenue streams – currently \$12 million in the 2014-2017 Transportation Improvement Program. Grantees must provide a non-federal match of at least 20 percent of the total project cost. In early 2012, the MPO announced its first round of winning projects, totaling \$2.5 million – most of which focused on safely connecting children to area schools through non-motorized facilities, demonstrating an increased demand for safe and convenient opportunities to encourage physical activity among young people.

Any MPO-member municipality with a project that meets federal requirements and improves or expands infrastructure to accommodate the active modes is eligible to apply on a competitive basis. Representative projects might include: construction of sidewalks or transit-customer amenities, expansion or restriping of roadways to accommodate bicyclists, “Share the Road” education campaigns targeting motorists and/or cyclists, multi-use paths to connect neighborhoods to schools, pedestrian-safety improvements at major intersections, and more.

Projects addressing needs identified in the MPO’s Regional Bicycle & Pedestrian Study will receive priority consideration. The Study’s vision and policy provisions were incorporated into the MPO’s *2035 Regional Transportation Plan*. Submissions for candidate projects are due into the MPO by May 30, and will be scored, ranked, and prioritized over the next couple of months by staff working alongside the MPO’s Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Committee. Project awards are then scheduled to be announced at the Oct. 15 meeting of the MPO Executive Board.

Investments in the non-motorized modes increase access to transit, provide safe and reliable choices for trips of short distances, promote physical activity, and encourage redevelopment of existing centers and corridors that may already have reached or be nearing expected capacity on supporting roadway infrastructure. For information on MPO efforts to support a transportation system that’s safer and more inclusive of active trip-making, visit NashvilleMPO.org/BikePed.

¹ **Active transportation** is daily travel powered by human energy. Walking, biking, taking transit (which often involves walking) are all means of active transportation. Encouraging active travel means creating seamless networks of accessible trails, sidewalks, and bikeways.